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Detailing CIA wrongs

The Examiner is to be congratulated for collecting so many appropriately discouraging essays on the CIA's failures ("The CIA story: Secrecy, arrogance, money — and disgrace," Opinion Page, Nov. 17).

The lesson is not that we should pay more attention to this single errant agency, but rather that we must attend to the dangers official secrecy poses to our Bill of Rights, to all human rights and even to democracy.

The CIA is not alone in abusing government power to pursue questionable secret policies. The FBI has similarly been caught using the shield of secrecy to commit unethical and illegal acts.

When misguided American institutions sponsored the immoral psychoactive drug-testing of unwitting Americans, when they clandestinely supported murderous dictators, when they confounded the American ideal of accountable governance by lying to the public, then lying to their congressional overseers and even lying to the president — on whose behalf were these public servants acting?

The misuse of official secrecy, and the wish by some to expand its use even after the Cold War, may pose the greatest threat to freedom in America.

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